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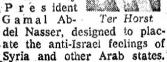
Mideast Events Came as a 'Surprise'

U.S. Intelligence Blamed for Foul-Up

Washington - When the clouds of crisis first began gathering over the Middle East, a senior American intelligence official pooh-poohed

the significance of Egyptian troop convoys moving through Cairo.

It was, he airily, said "anoth-'just er show" by President



By J. F. TER HORST

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"Nasser's probably just marching them up and down the hill again," he said.

Fourteen hours later, the world was electrified by Naspeacekeeping force on the Israel - Egypt border be withdrawn immediately. The next day, Egyptian troops began occupying UN positions "on the line."

Poor Performance

trate to White House officials economic and military supnow poorly the U.S. intellipliers for hated Israel. gence community has functioned in the Middle East crist Prior Relations

news that Jordan's young King, that have gone to Egypt, mili-ligence foul up may have been "friends," had signed a mili-to Jordan, plus the vast American provided by the Russians, who tary pact with Nasser that ican oil interests in the Midiare openly on the Arab side.

known even to itself, the Central Intelligence Agency apprehenses to have been caught Where the Amer completely offguard by Nas-ligence community ser's military and diplomatic however, was not only in the ripe for plucking. coups in recent weeks, And field, but apparently in Wash-the Defense Intelligence Agen-ington. cy, Secretary Robert S. Mc-Namara's streamlined, uni-fied military counterpart to the CIA, fared no better.

Excuses Offered

Excuses being given by CIA and DIA, according to know- preparing and vith Israel. ledgeable sources, fall into two categories. One is that American agents in the Mideast and elsewhere were so accustomed to anti-Israeli propaganda in the Arab countries that they assumed Nasser once again was only crying wolf. The other alibi is that the British and French intelligence services were taken by surprise, too.

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The President's key advisers can understand the second explanation. Britain France have been in low repute among Arab leaders ever since they permitted the estabser's demand that the UN lishment of the State of Israel in Palestine in 1948 and fought against Egyptian forces in the Suez crisis of 1956.

The British, whether in government or business, are regarded with enmity because they once were the colonial masters of Arabia. The ? French fare no better, prim-The episode serves to illus- arily because they are the

But Administration leaders. But it only hints at the characteristic of t pledged Jordan's assistance die East; Such relationships in the anti-Israeli campaign. with any country are trad-For reasons apparently not litional havens or "covers" for

ligence community fell down, hears, felt Hussein might be

Agents in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel reportedly advised Washington, somewhat belatedly, that signs of troop movements and the attitudes of Arab leaders indicated that Nasser might be preparing for his long prom-

Field Data Rejected

But the CIA Evaluations Board, which prepares a daily intelligence summary for Mr. Johnson, and the Pentagon's DIA chose to regard the field data as not particularly alarming. The opinion that Nasser was staging another show was an opinion formu-

The result of the intelligence breakdown has been to give Administration major problems it did not count on-

Jordan's King Hussein, the beneficiary of millions in U. S. military aid, had been expected to be at least somewhat neutral.

But Hussein's domestic political pressures and Jordan's ties with Islam were totally under - rated, and seemingly, have been for a long time.

U.S. 'Hardware'

The President faces the prospect of Jordan's American jets and tanks and the American - trained Jordanian: Army — the best in the Arab world — will be used against Israel if war comes.

And with Hussein over in the Nasser camp, White House of-

The Soviet Embassy in Cairo reportedly knew in advance of the secret Nasser - Hussein meeting, because agents in the Jordanian cap-Where the American intel-ital of Amman, Washington